



Auckland
**Women's
Centre**

G O S S I P

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Grey Lynn
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akcentre@womensz.org.nz

P.O. Box 78 271
Grey Lynn
www.womensz.org.nz
Autumn 2006

Centre Hours

Mon to Fri
9am - 4pm

Library also
First Sat of month
11am - 1.30pm

Collective 2006

Abigael Vogt
Alison Greenaway
Anna Witten-Sage
Annalise Myers
Leonie Morris
Paulette Benton-Greig
Sarah Greenaway
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Kia ora koutou wahine ma! Greetings from the Women's Centre.

Our main focus this term will be organising **SKIP Positive Parenting Events** for young mothers. This is the second phase of our SKIP project which began with training some young mothers to be SKIP Positive Parenting Champions. For the Positive Parenting Events we are working in partnership with Grey Lynn Library, Auckland Botanical Gardens, Tamaki Play Centre Association, Mai FM, the agencies who referred peer support mums and the young mothers themselves. These events also aim to encourage young mothers to explore the resources available in their local and wider Auckland community, that can support a parenting positively approach to mothering.

Young mothers are invited to the following events:

1. **Story Time** at the Grey Lynn Library, Friday 5 May, 10-12 noon
2. **Autumn Day Out** at the children's garden, Auckland Botanical Gardens (date to be advised)
3. **Mucking In** at Playcentre (date to be advised)

All the events will draw on a particular SKIP positive parenting message and our Peer Support Champions have some great ideas of how we can pull the themes together. All the events are free with free transport and morning tea provided. Young mothers who wish to register for the events can ring the Centre or txt their name, age and address and their children's ages to 021 0239 3983.



Research on a **brief history of the Centre** is going well.

We are keen to hear from more women with interesting anecdotes from the Centre's past.

Our Young Women's Advocate, Anna Witten-Sage, has completed her training as a **self-defence teacher** of intermediate and secondary school aged girls. Anna can provide age-appropriate workshops equipping girls and young women with skills for keeping themselves safe. This includes discussions about controlling fear and embarrassment, awareness of safety issues (including technology safety), making good decisions, and self esteem and verbal assertiveness. Participants also learn some physical self-defence techniques: punching, kicking, blocking and escaping holds and grabs. If you would like Anna to teach at your school, or to a group, please email her on youngwomen@womensz.org.nz .

The Centre is supporting the **Flexible Working Hours Bill** which will assist parents who wish to work part-time. At the Select Committee the business sector argued that the New Zealand situation was different from the UK, whose legislation this Bill is based on, and thus the legislation was misplaced. The Select Committee is putting the Bill aside for a year and has asked officials to undertake further work to collect and collate information on New Zealand workplace practices regarding flexible working hours, and to consult more widely on both the principles of, and delivery mechanisms, for flexible working hours. If you would like to help with our work on this Bill please contact Leonie at the Centre.

AT THE AUCKLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE . . .

BREAST SCREENING UNIT AT AUCKLAND WOMEN'S CENTRE

From Monday 15 May to Friday 2 June, the mobile breast screening unit will be based at the Centre providing free screening for women aged from 45 to 69 inclusive. It would be great to see lots of the women who use the Auckland Women's Centre taking advantage of the free service. Mammograms (breast x-rays) are the best way of picking up very early breast cancers, and the government The entire visit only takes about 20 minutes – and although the mammogram can be a bit uncomfortable, it certainly is not unbearable.

If you are in the right age bracket and have not had a mammogram in the last year, you can enrol by either (a) filling in a form at the Centre, (b) asking your doctor for a referral, or (c) ringing 0800 270 200. You will then be sent an appointment, which you can change if the time or place does not suit. Don't miss out; this is an easy way to have a simple check which may save your life.

COUNSELLING

Sarah Tritt has been working as a counsellor at the Centre for many years and has now shifted to Christchurch. Thank you very much, Sarah, for your excellent contribution to the Centre. We welcome Anna Cowan, who has taken Sarah's time slot (Thursday afternoons). Like Sarah, Anna has a diploma from the Institute of Psychosynthesis. Psychosynthesis is a process of personal growth that works towards health functioning in everyday life and then development of one's maximum potential. Fees are on a sliding scale of \$30 to \$80. Please ring the Centre for an appointment.

LIBRARY AMNESTY FOR OVERDUE BOOKS

Please check your bookshelves and return overdue library books to the Centre before 31 May and (we promise!) no grief will be given. The library is open Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm and on the first Saturday of every month from 11am to 1.30pm. If you visit the Centre to return books after hours, there is a library returns box in the alcove on the porch.

Come in to the library and have a look at the large number of new books in the library, recently purchased with generous funding by the ASB Charitable Trust. Library membership is available to all women, whether you are reading for pleasure or academic study. A year's subscription is \$5 for beneficiaries and between \$10 and \$20 for those not on a benefit.

HEALTH SERVICES

In conjunction with Well Women's Nursing Services we have now extended our smear tests and breast examinations service to include full consultations on women's health issues, such as menopause and PMS. Appointments available at the Centre on Friday mornings once a month. Next available dates are: 26 May, 9 June and 14 July.

Low cost MASSAGE is now available on Mondays between 9.30am and 1.30pm. Cost is \$20 for beneficiaries and a sliding scale between \$25 and \$40 for non-beneficiaries for an hour-long session.

COURSES AND GROUPS . . .

Our **Girlie Games Nights** are a huge success. Thanks very much to Ellie Lim, who facilitates this group on a volunteer basis. Don't be put off by the name, all ages enjoy these nights. Game nights are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month. No need to book, just turn up and introduce yourself to Ellie.

New this term is **Travelling Creatively and Confidently Through your 20s**. This course for women in their twenties uses art therapy to explore aspects of your life – independence, identity, relationships (or lack of), career paths, and dreams to discover real solutions to your challenges. **Stop and Smell the Flowers** is a workshop designed to melt away your stress, help you connect to yourself, reflect on your life, have fun and stop the busyness. Our new **Yoga for Older Women** classes aid healing, strength and flexibility.

Other support groups on offer include: our free **Solo Mothers Support Group**, **Walking Back to Happiness**, a **Coming Out Group** for women questioning their sexuality or who want to explore personal issues related to coming out as a lesbian, and **Building a New Life After Separation**.



Louise Nicholas on Trial

The trial of three men charged with raping Louise Nicholas is over. They have been found not guilty. The matters covered by the trial took place nearly 20 years ago. The men were all policemen at the time. They were all in stable relationships. They were between 7 and 13 years older than Louise. She was 17 and 18 and worked on the check-out at a fruit and vegetable shop. She claims she was forced to submit to sexual intercourse with each of them in front of the others and then had a police baton pushed up her rectum by one of them. The men agreed to the main facts – they each had sexual intercourse with her in front of their mates. The difference was they said she had consented to it. They denied the baton claim.

Consent

Many women (and men) in New Zealand accept what Louise Nicholas said – she did not consent to the sordid and demeaning behaviour. They understand about sexual coercion and the exploitation of power imbalances. They understand that consent isn't given just because you do not scream and cry at the time and make a complaint straight afterwards. They understand the insidious damage that rape causes in the psyche of many victims. Also that the key events took place so long ago. Memory and recall can be unreliable over time and the defence, understandably, exploited every contradiction. We will never know what doubts the jury had – but it is almost definitely to be about her credibility. Did she really consent? Little has changed in the 20 years of rape law reform. Louise Nicho-

las was the person on trial – not the accused.

Lives half lived

There are thousands upon thousands of women and girls (and some men and boys) living in this country with the memory of having been forced into sexual activity against their will. They have been raped by men they went on dates with, by friends and associates and friends of friends and associates, by fathers, uncles, brothers, family friends, as well as strangers. For some the memory is a few days old, for others

Nicholas spoke out publicly. They have had positions of economic and social power in society. Clint Rickards was in line for the top job before the allegations were made public. We make three calls for action following this trial.

Review the rape laws

First, the case highlights the serious ongoing difficulties with the rape trial process. We call on the government to urgently establish a review and endorse previous calls made by the Public Issues Committee of the Auckland District Law Society in 2002 and the Women's Consultative Group of the New Zealand Law Society in 2004, to adjust the legal process in relation to rape.

Reveal relevant convictions

Our second call is for a change in the rape law to enable

past relevant criminal convictions or similar behaviour of the accused to be able to be introduced into the trial. The jury has a right to know relevant facts about the past of the accused – just as it does of the complainant.

Dismiss Rickards

Our third call is for the Minister of Police to dismiss Clint Rickards from the Police Force on the basis of his admitted behaviour. His behaviour has brought the entire Police Force into ridicule and disrepute and further undermined the confidence of women in it. Though a long time ago, his lack of public remorse or apology has deepened the crisis of confidence. He is unfit to wear the Police uniform.

March in support of Louise, see back page

Rape Statistics

- ?? 1 in 16 women in New Zealand is sexually assaulted each year.
- ?? An estimated 80 percent of rapes are not reported to the police.
- ?? When rape charges are laid, only 10 percent of those make it to court.
- ?? Only one third of that 10 percent result in a conviction.

60 and 70 years old. The vast majority have never been to the Police. Their abusers have never been held to account. The outcome of this trial will ensure their ongoing silence. And so we, as a nation, have lives half lived, potentials never reached, sexual relationships with loved ones forever damaged. Children, spouses, partners, workmates, wider family members and neighbours all deprived of relationships with a whole person, usually not ever understanding what is missing.

Three calls for action

The 'young bulls in the paddock', as someone has affectionately described these three men's behaviour during the incident, have moved on. They have probably never given it a second thought, until Louise

WELL WOMEN'S CLINIC

Free

Cervical smear tests for women:

- ?? Community Service Card holders who are due for a smear test
- ?? women who have not had a test in 5 years.

Advice

On managing periods, PMS, menopause, stress incontinence using natural remedies, diet & lifestyle Consultations \$45.00 (½ hour)

Clinics at Auckland Women's Centre
Ph: 376 3227
once a month and all Auckland areas

For more information ph: 523 0263



Well Women's Nursing Service

Women's progress to top jobs dismal

Women are making "dismal progress" to leadership positions in New Zealand according to a new report.

Almost two thirds of the top 100 companies listed on the NZSX have no women at the governance level says EEO Commissioner, Dr Judy McGregor. The **New Zealand Census of Women's Participation 2006** also reveals that women make up only 46 of the 645 directorships of the top 100 companies, and that just two companies have gender parity on their boards.

Women account for just 7.13 per cent of corporate governance positions, up only two per cent from the last census two years ago. New Zealand lags well behind most other similar countries for gender balance in corporate governance, including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Gender representation on Crown companies that operate major public utilities - such as power, energy, postal services, public broadcasting and airports - has remained static in the last two years, with 35 per cent of women on their boards. In academic life, women's progress to senior positions of Professor or Associate Professor has also been grindingly slow. Women hold 16.91 per cent of senior positions, up slightly from 15.82 percent two years ago.

The Census of Women's Participation is a benchmarking tool produced every two years. This year's report includes an **Agenda for Change**, which identifies a range of strategies to help increase women's participation in leadership roles. The **New Zealand Census of Women's Participation 2006** is at www.neon.org.nz. The **Agenda for Change** on page 52 outlines a number of useful proposals.

Kotare trust

Has a beautiful venue in Wellsford for hire
Reasonable rates

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Kaupapa reviews

Team building

Strategic planning . . .

Catering and facilitation assistance
by arrangement

Inquires to Mandi (09) 423 9228 or
kotare.trust@xtra.co.nz

NOT ABOVE THE LAW

We Support Louise Nicholas

MARCH

Sunday 30 April, 2.00 pm

Assemble Queen Elizabeth Square
(near Britomart)

March up Queen St to Aotea Square
Hear speakers from Rape Crisis, Auckland
Sexual Abuse Help Foundation

Bring your friends, banners and placards

Rape Awareness Week 1-7 May